Comfort from the Unexpected by Ectoblastic

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The Ultimate Enemy Oneshot. Since moving in with Vlad, Danny has suffered numerous nightmares that result in his powers going haywire. Vlad contemplates how to resolve the issue to prevent his mansion from falling apart.

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Comfort from the Unexpected

Author's Note:

> Hey guys! It's been a while. I can't believe how much love In Due Time has gotten since I've been gone. Truth be told, I re-read it the other day and I'm not happy with it. I would like to rewrite it and fix everything that makes me cringe. As I was thinking of rewriting it, I came up with this little oneshot that is similar to In Due Time, but with a much kinder Vlad. This is strictly BadgerCereal.

A deep burn tore through Vlad's chest. Violently, he jolted awake and ripped off his bedsheets to soothe the intense heat. He gasped for air, hot puffs smoking past his mouth. Despite the unnatural heat of his body, a supernatural chill buzzed through the atmosphere; too cold for a hot summer's night.

Vlad leapt from his bed and in a flash of black rings he flew off. Intangibly he shot across the many halls and rooms of his esteemed manor. His core grew searingly hotter the closer he flew towards the source.

The rising heat in his chest overpowered him, forcing him to cease flight and fall to his knees. Unable to bear it any longer, he transformed back. At least the sensation was slightly more tolerable in his human form. Grimacing, Vlad raised himself from the ground and bolted intangibly through wall after wall.

Formations of ice grew more prominent as he journeyed closer, alight with a ghostly glow. They traveled unnaturally fast through the halls, enveloping everything in their path. The room he had been traveling desperately towards came in view. Bursts of intense ectoplasmic energy shot out in pulses, furthering the ice with each push. An earsplitting ghastly wail sent shockwaves through his estate, shaking it down to the foundation. Unbelievably frigid air bit at Vlad's intangible body as he approached the supernatural door.

He phased through the room to the sight of Danny Phantom

thrashing violently and hovering 10 feet above his bed. Danny looked ghostly pale and his gloves were singed off from the pure concentration of ectoplasmic energy radiating from them. The contents of his room swirled violently around his unconscious form in a ghostly tornado, growing faster as they came closer to him. Blocks of ice thicker than those in the halls enveloped the room, covering every inch of wall, floor, and furniture. The unbearably loud sonic waves of Danny's ghostly wail were crashing a hole through the ceiling.

Vlad clutched at his searing chest, knowing he could not do anything other than wait out the terrifying sights and sounds. Daniel had shorted his Plasmius Maximus with the first night terror. Vlad had since rebuilt it, but did not dare attempt to use it again.

The ghostly wail died, and subsequently all ectoplasmic activity. Various items fell from the ceiling and clattered to the ground. After a flash of white rings Danny's unconscious body fell. Vlad dove to catch him, and they unceremoniously crashed into the thick ice coating Danny's bed. The impact woke Danny up.

"Daniel. Are you alright?" Vlad gasped, holding his side. A sharp piece of ice had jabbed him on his landing.

Danny seethed, curling in on himself and his burning hands. Vlad grabbed a hold of one and examined it. In his human form they showed up as first degree burns.

"These night terrors are getting worse." Vlad remarked. Daniel hadn't burned his hands before. This was the third occurrence in the past month. Two other bedrooms had been destroyed, both of which were still being rebuilt. If this kept up, there may no longer be a home anymore.

A hoarse sob wracked through Danny's throat. He pulled his hand from Vlad and clutched at his chest, weeping freely. Vlad watched the teen cry, concern eating away at him.

There had to be a way to stop these nightmares. Perhaps he could modify the Plasmius Maximus to disrupt Danny's powers for the duration of the night? Though, the amount of power required for it

scared Vlad. There was a high possibility it could permanently affect Danny's ability to tap into his ghostly half. It was too dangerous.

Maybe he could create a room built to withstand Daniel's nightmares. But it would take months to design and bring to fruition, who knew what destruction Daniel could do in the time being?

Or he could repurpose his ghost shield and confine its radius just inches past Daniel's bed. Although, it could result in worse injuries. It did not bode well to have Daniel trapped in a confined space with such raw power emanating uncontrollably from him.

Vlad was at a loss for what to do. Daniel's delicate psychological state was not immediately curable. He frowned down at the still crying boy who looked just as distraught as he had when he was in the midst of his nightmare. It did not take a genius to guess what haunted Daniel's dreams.

Vlad wrapped his arms around him and pulled him up into a hug. Daniel felt freezing, no doubt from his ghost powers peaking and the thick ice surrounding them. Vigorously, Vlad rubbed Danny's arms to try and warm him back up.

Danny's sobs fell quieter. Prior to these circumstances, Vlad would have been the last person Danny found comfort in. But their roles had changed since Danny arrived on his doorstep. Gone were the indignant warring attitudes of their past, replaced with reserved and curt consideration for the other. The explosion had affected both of them greatly, more than Vlad wanted to admit.

Vlad's brow furrowed as he pondered one last resort.

"…Daniel." Vlad stated hesitantly, loosening his hold on the boy. "Maybe you should sleep next to me for the time being."

Danny did not meet Vlad's eyes. He took in a shaky breath and wiped tears from his eyes, considering Vlad's suggestion. Softly, he replied, "I appreciate everything you've done for me Vlad, but…I'd rather sleep in my own bed."

"I understand." Vlad said. "But three rooms have been destroyed. I'd

rather be close so I can detect when your powers are beginning to spike and use the Maximus before it grows out of control. These nightmare episodes are increasing in intensity. What if you bring down the house on us? Or seriously injure yourself?" He gestured towards Danny's hands.

"I…." Daniel stared dejectedly at the ground, taking in the gravity of Vlad's tone. Although their roles had since changed, their volatile past still hung in the background. Naturally, Danny was hesitant.

"At least until I can devise a method to protect both you and the house, or prevent the nightmares." Vlad bargained. "Likely, in a couple days. At most, this week."

With much hesitation, Danny nodded in agreement.

"Alright." Vlad stated. An awkward silence fell between them. "Well…I suppose we should get out of this mess before the roof caves in on us, hm?"

Both of them were exhausted beyond measure. They climbed out of the wreckage of what used to be Danny's third bedroom and began the trek towards Vlad's room at the other end of the mansion. The damage of this particular episode was worse than the previous two, with the ceiling completely open to the elements and the extent of Danny's ice powers reaching far beyond the halls where he slept. Danny gaped at the ice formations, perturbed by the reach of his unconscious outbursts.

"Vlad?" Danny asked quietly as they walked. Timid drips of water plopped around them from slowly melting ice.

"Yes?"

"I'm sorry for destroying another bedroom. And your ceiling."

Vlad turned to look at Danny, a small, reassuring smile on his tired face. "You have nothing to apologize for when these circumstances are beyond your control." His words did little to comfort Danny, though he sensed this and added, "We'll figure things out," albeit with less confidence.

Truth be told, Vlad had no idea how he was supposed to handle the effects of PTSD in a child. One with volatile ghost powers, nonetheless. The night terrors were one of many strange symptoms he had witnessed in Daniel since he moved in.

Curiosity beat at Danny's chest as a pair of vast double doors eventually came into view. Danny had never been allowed to enter Vlad's room. It was one of three places that were off limits. Tiredly, Vlad pushed them open and beckoned Danny, who did not immediately follow, to enter.

Shrouded in the darkness of night, Vlad picked at a lamp beside his bed and the room filled with a soft warm glow. Danny stood warily by the bedroom doors, taking in the space while Vlad tiredly ambled into his bathroom. Surprisingly, it was not green and gold like his foyer, but largely maroon in color. Vaulted ceilings towered over the solitary room and its many priceless furnishings. It was too grand for the single lonely man Vlad was.

"Come, Daniel." Vlad's voice came from the bathroom. Danny rubbed at his eyes and followed, walking past Vlad's inviting and unmade four poster bed.

Gauze, bandages, and a tub of ointment were laid out on the bathroom counter. He let Vlad patch up his injured hands, trying to blink away the sleepiness in his eyes. By the time Vlad had finished, they were both too tired to exchange words. Vlad made a beeline for his bed and Danny clambered in on the other side, careful to leave plenty of space between himself and the man.

There was almost a grandeur in how plush Vlad's bed was. Danny sunk into the mattress, the silken sheets swallowing him. Normally, Danny would be too tense to sleep so close to Vlad. But he was too tired to care.

Vlad awoke yet again, this time to Danny tossing and turning feverishly.

"No…no…" Danny murmured in the haze of his nightmare.

With a soft groan, Vlad slunk an arm around the cold teenager and pulled him in, hoping to quell the movements that had pulled him from his sleep. Danny was shivering, his hands were fisted, and his legs periodically kicked and jerked.

“Please. Don’t die, don’t go away…” He whispered, his neck twisting around.

Vlad gave Danny a reassuring squeeze. Slowly, Danny’s kicking and jerking relented. The light supernatural charge in the air died out. His breath slowed down and the muscles in his face relaxed.

Vlad didn’t know he had been holding his breath until he released it in a soft sigh. Perhaps the solution to the nightmares was one beyond mechanical invention, but rather of a social nature. Daniel simply needed a paternal figure to comfort him when his post traumatic stress peaked.

To Vlad’s surprise, Danny curled against his body and nestled into the green bay packers logo of his nightshirt. Oblivious that he was seeking comfort in what used to be his archnemesis.

Normally Vlad would have been elated. Here he was, with Daniel finally as his son. But the circumstances were far beyond ideal. Daniel was a shell of the feisty, brash superhero he used to be. And Vlad was struggling to pick up the pieces.

There was much about fatherhood he had yet to learn. And as he thought about his years in the hospital alone and suffering, one thing became strikingly clear to him.

He didn’t want Danny to end up like him.